

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (Previously presented) A method for micropropagation of plants, comprising the steps of:

- (a) contacting plant material with a microorganism that induces fasciation;
- (b) developing leafy galls or shoot outgrowths on the plant material;
- (c) isolating the leafy galls or shoot outgrowths as a starting material for micropropagation of plants;
- (d) eliminating or inactivating the microorganism that induces fasciation ;
- (e) culturing the leafy gall or shoot outgrowths in or on one or more suitable culture media to allow shoot and root development for obtaining plantlets; and
- (f) transferring the plantlets thus obtained to conventional growing conditions to obtain regenerated plants,

wherein the plant material is chosen from the group consisting of intact plants, leaf discs, organs, tissue fragments, seedlings, seeds, embryos, isolated cells, protoplasts, cell cultures and callus tissues.

Claim 2. (Previously presented) A method of preservation of plants or germplasm storage comprising the steps of:

- (a) contacting plant material with a microorganism that induces fasciation;
- (b) developing leafy galls or shoot outgrowths on the plant material;
- (c) isolating the leafy galls or shoot outgrowths as a starting material for micropropagation of plants; and
- (d) storing the leafy galls or shoot outgrowths under growth limiting conditions,

further characterized in that said plant material is chosen from the group consisting of intact plants, leaf discs, organs, tissue fragments, seedlings, seeds, embryos, isolated cells, protoplasts, cell cultures and callus tissues.

Claim 3. (Cancelled)

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Claim 4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the fasciation-inducing microorganism is *Rhodococcus fascians*.

Claim 5-6. (Cancelled)

Claim 7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the plant material is material of species of families selected from the group consisting of: *Brassicaceae*, *Salicaceae*, *Compositae*, *Solanaceae*, *Scrophulariaceae*, *Liliaceae*, *Papaveraceae*, *Gramineae* and *Fabaceae*.

Claim 8. (Cancelled)

Claim 9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the plantlets are acclimatized before conventional growing conditions to obtain regenerated plants.

Claim 10-24. (Cancelled)

Claim 25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the fasciation-inducing microorganism is *Rhodococcus fascians*.

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Applicants' representative would like to thank Examiner Para for the helpful telephonic interviews of December 2nd and 3rd, 2003. During the interview of December 2nd, Examiner Para agreed that claims 1 + 2 and 9 would be allowable. In a subsequent telephonic interview on December 3rd, Examiner Para confirmed that Claim 1 as presented in the after final amendment of September 2, 2003 would be allowable as it combines the previous claims 1 and 2. Examiner Para commented that Roussaux does not teach the conventional growing conditions of step (f) of claim 1 as amended.

Examiner Para also confirmed that Claims 2 and 9 would be allowable as indicated in the Examiner's comments on page 2 of the Advisory Action mailed November 19, 2003.